Provision of low cost personal computers

*73. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to provide low cost personal computers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that for the below Rs. 10,000 computers, the Government desires financing packages as well as suitable policies to ensure their mass production; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) to (d) The Government is facilitating the Industry through suitable policy measures to make available personal computers (PCs) at affordable prices for the masses. An Expert Committee on "PC Penetration, Internet and Domestic Software" set up on January 11, 2005 by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Department of Information Technology submtted its report on Aprii 26, 2005. The Committee has recommended several measures for popularization of usage of computers, the internet and at the same time making personal computers affordable through easy financing.

Diversion of funds

*74. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the total corpus in the Employees Provident Fund at present;

(b) whether Government are investing certain portion of the fund in stocks and shares;

(c) if so, the details of stocks and shares in which the funds are invested;

(d) whether Government are considering to divert a portion of the funds for granting pension to the contributors and for undertaking certain

social welfare activities, like setting up of technical institutions, hospitals, labour intensive commercial activities, etc;

(e) if so, the details in this regard; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO) : (a) The Corpus of the Employees' Provident Fund, as on 31.3.2005 was Rs. 79,764.48 crore.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The question does not arise in view of (b) above.

(d) to (f) As per the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, the employers and the employees contribute at a rate of 12% each of the basic wages of the employees. Out of 12% of employers' contribution, 8.33% is diverted to the Pension Fund for providing pensionary benefits to the subscribers and their families and the balance 15.67% is deposited in the Provident Fund. The amount outstanding at the credit of the members' account cannot be diverted for any other purpose. Therefore, it is not possible to divert a portion of the Fund for any social welfare activities.

Telephone booths at ration shops

*75. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to establish telephone booths at public distribution shops (ration shops);

(b) if so, whether the proposal has been accepted by the State Governments;

(c) if so, the details including the number of such booths proposed to be set up, State-wise and category-wise as on today; and

(d) if so, the State Governments which have accepted the above proposal as on date?